



BOAB BULLETIN

No. 72

February 2006

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

commencing at 7.15 for 7.30 p.m. at

Shenton Park Community Centre, cnr Onslow and Herbert Roads

Wednesday, 1 February 2006

Kevin Coate
(Kimberley naturalist)

'Cruising the Kimberley Coast'

Wednesday, 1 March 2006

Lindsay Peet
(military historian)

'The saga of the *Shady Lady*'

Members and visitors are invited to stay for supper after meetings.
The Society asks a \$2.00 hospitality fee from non-members.

KIMBERLEY EVENTS

Staircase to the Moon, Broome	15–17 March, 14–16 April, 14–16 May, 12–14 June
Buccaneer Fishing Classic, ex-Derby	April
King Tide Day, Derby	May
Ord River Muster	6–21 May, with Kimberley Moon Concert on the 13th

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to a new year of the Kimberley Society. As this issue of *Boab Bulletin* goes to press the Kimberley is copping a bucketing of torrential rains from thunderstorms associated with cyclone Daryl, and looks like having a great Wet. While this causes problems for many at this time of the year, without it the Kimberley would not be the Kimberley!

The speakers program for 2006 is still being finalized, but there will be a variety of subjects covered and it is hoped that there is something for everyone. We try our best to vary the subject matter to include history, science, arts, and tourism and this year will do just that. The publication of the Kimberley Rock Art Seminar proceedings will also be a highlight. We are currently waiting on the return of manuscripts from the authors following transcription of the audio tapes of the meeting. It is hoped that a substantial well-illustrated book will eventuate within a few months.

Another goal for the Society this year is a new improved web site and we hope to address that over the next few months also. We will keep you posted!

Mike Donaldson

THE KIMBERLEY COAST

Members and visitors attending Kevin Coate's presentation on 'Cruising the Kimberley Coast' will have an opportunity to purchase signed copies of Len Zell's excellent book *A Guide to the Kimberley Coast* and his photo CD of Kimberley images (100 of which were not used in the book). Len, as well as being a Kimberley Society member, is a biologist whose main expertise is in coastal environments. The book and the CD (for personal use only) contain superb images that include animals, birds, reptiles, landforms, scenery, rock art, and much more. The book retails at \$35.95, the CD at \$39.95, or the two items for \$65. A discount will be available to members, and Len's donation of the postage costs will allow some of the proceeds to go towards our fund for special projects. Also available for viewing on the night will be Len's latest work, *Wild Discovery Guide: Shark Bay – Ningaloo Coast & Outback Pathways*, which was co-authored by Susie Bedford. It has the same format as Len's Kimberley book but, at 206 pages, it provides an additional 40 pages for the same outlay. All of these items can be purchased through Wild Discovery at PO Box 1034, Armidale, NSW 2350 (www.wilddiscovery.com.au or len@lenzell.com).

MORE ON THE KIMBERLEY COAST

On 22 January, the "Escape" supplement in the *Sunday Times* (Perth) published a list of ten 'Australian destinations that hold a special historical or cultural niche in the nation's psyche'. The Kimberley coast was not only one of the ten icons, it also provided the full-page colour photograph for the front page of the supplement.

In describing this 'gem', reporters Brad Crouch and Jenny Stevens wrote, in part:

It is so vast, so untamed, so empty of all we consider civilised, that it leaves you humbled and in awe. Yet, this coastline, snaking north from Broome around the 800 islands of the Buccaneer Archipelago and onwards past a country of great waterfalls, deep chasms and rugged beauty, has wonders that elsewhere would have tourists queuing for entrance.

Stand by for the formation of the queue!

BOOK NOTE

***Lost World of the Kimberley: Extraordinary glimpses of Australia's Ice Age Ancestors* by Ian Wilson.** Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest (NSW), 2006. Soft cover, 315 pages, colour illustrations, maps. ISBN 1 74114 391 8. RRP \$35.00.

Very interesting! My reaction to this book—that of one historian reading another historian's work—will no doubt differ markedly from that of an Aboriginal custodian, an archaeologist, an anthropologist, or a rock art enthusiast. Other readers may take issue with some of the book's more provocative or speculative components but I was impressed by its attempts to add a human dimension to the Kimberley's Bradshaw, *Gwion Gwion*, or *giro giro* rock art.

Ian Wilson is new to Australian topics but, with more than twenty books to his credit, he has a solid background in historical research and writing. His books include *Before the Flood: The biblical flood as a real event and how it changed the course of civilization* and, with a narrower focus, *The Blood and the Shroud: New evidence that the world's most sacred relic is real*.

Lost World of the Kimberley takes the reader on a personal journey in which the author and his wife Judith researched, visited, photographed, sketched, and analysed some of the Kimberley's early rock art. He is generous in acknowledging his predecessors and guides but expresses frustration at his inability to establish a rapport with Grahame Walsh and that author's patrons. He comments on Grahame Walsh's published work but was unable to persuade him to discuss theories, reveal the location of any of his discoveries, or provide access to unpublished photographs. That impediment was, to a limited extent, offset by other rock art enthusiasts sharing their knowledge and photographs and taking the Wilsons not only to sites that matched published photographs but also to others apparently 'unknown to Walsh'.

For me, the most interesting parts of *Lost World of the Kimberley* are those in which the author relates aspects of Kimberley rock art to non-Kimberley art works, artefacts, photographs and sketches. For example, in musing about Grahame Walsh hypothesising that the presence of what appear to be dingoes may be indicative of a work having been executed within the last 4000 years, Ian Wilson positions a photograph of one of the "dingoes" against a rare image of thylacine. The thylacine, extinct in mainland Australia for 5000 years, bears a strong resemblance (helped by flipping the image to the left), to that of the animal in the painting. The thylacine hypothesis came from Kimberley archaeologist Lee Scott-Virtue but, in running with it, Ian Wilson follows Dr David Welch's approach of comparing components of rock art with archival photographs. That approach lends strong support to Dr Welch's hypotheses about ceremony in rock art, and it works well with the analysis of human and animal figures, and objects such as boats, in *Lost World of the Kimberley*.

In putting forward his hypotheses, conjecture and opinions, Ian Wilson hopes to generate 'the widest possible, intelligent debate' about the origin, meaning and management of Kimberley rock art. Robust debate is certain to occur but it may focus on the present rather than the past. Throwing down the gauntlet in the areas of access and management is not without its risks, and it will be interesting to see how the rock art fraternity responds to a newcomer who dares to offer opinions not just about the content and context of the art but also about who has the right to see it. *Lost World of the Kimberley* will be in the public domain following its launch on 3 February, and copies will be available for purchase at the Kimberley Society meeting of 1 March. The review copy will be available for perusal at the February meeting.

Cathie Clement

OLD HALLS CREEK POST OFFICE RUINS

Another milestone has been reached at Old Halls Creek with the completion of the work on the roof over the mud brick ruin of the old post office. Murray River North Pty Ltd, the firm that built the roof in 2002, has just finished installing the third gable and the gable ends that had to be omitted (for want of money) when the Stage One works were done. The third gable, which is above the original entrance to the post office, helps to make the roof look as much like the original as possible. The gable ends, as well as being in keeping with the design of the original roof, will reduce the amount of rain driven through the openings.



New gable, installed on the front elevation, 2006. The infill in the gable end has been duplicated in the two existing gables. The age of the tree in the photograph is unknown but, as can be seen from the photograph below, it has undergone little change since the 1940s. Photograph courtesy of Murray River North Pty Ltd.

Front elevation of the post office, photographed in 1946 by an Australian Inland Mission Sister who is now a member of the Kimberley Society. Photograph courtesy of Mrs Dulcie Andrew (nee Peel) and the late Derek Keene.



This component of the Stage Two works was made possible by the generosity of the people who have contributed substantial sums to the tax-deductible appeal that the Kimberley Society runs under the umbrella of the National Trust of Australia (WA). The balance of the tax-deductible funds, plus the money that has been raised from the monthly raffle and other sources, is earmarked for the interpretation panels that will be installed this year. All of these works, like the Stage One works, are being done with the permission of the owner of the ruins.

Cathie Clement (Old Halls Creek Appeal Coordinator)

WINE ART

The Kimberley produces rum and, although I am unaware of any boutique breweries in Broome, I've certainly had home brew courtesy of one of the brothers at Kalumburu Monastery.

The Kimberley is not suited for wine grapes. However, Leeuwin Estate has included Kimberley artworks on the last two vintages of its Art Series Shiraz. The 2001 Shiraz features a painting by Tjumbo Tjapanangka entitled "Wilkin Karra" which is the Kukatja name for Lake Mackay, a large salt lake on the W.A./N.T. border. The 2002 vintage shows a work in ochre by Hector Jandany replete with owls and country, which at first glance is reminiscent of the work by the late Rover Thomas.

What are the wines like? I can tell you that the "Tjumbo" 2001, which we had with out lamb roast recently, is drinking very well.

Jack Vercoe

CAN YOU HELP?

Kimberley Society member Steffi Heussi is branching out in her work as a tour guide and will be presenting lecturers on a German cruise liner in the near future. She needs to access good images of Aboriginal art (on rock, bark, and canvas) for those lectures. Any assistance or advice that Kimberley Society members can provide with regard to obtaining images will be most welcome. Steffi attends most meetings and she can be contacted by e-mail on steffiheussi@hotmail.com.

WANDJINAS AT WA MUSEUM

I used to go to the Museum quite frequently and take my children who always enjoyed the stuffed animals and the Discovery Centre at the Museum.

I hadn't been there for ages until I took my daughter at the beginning of January. The exhibit of Aboriginal Culture in Western Australia has been shifted to upstairs and up from the stuffed animal exhibit. It had previously been in the building which is now condemned because of the asbestos problem.

I was delighted to find then at the far end of the exhibit the reconstructed rock art cave. It was done in about the 1970s by Wattie Karruwarra. This had previously been downstairs near one of the dinosaur exhibits. Further at the end of the gallery is a space which exhibits numerous photographs of Wandjina art from the Kimberley. One of the photographs includes the late Sam Woolagoodja.

There is also a painting on board by Wattie Karruwarra which was said to be done as a practice for his rock art shelter. For those who missed out on the rock art seminar, or for those who need a fix for some rock art, this part of the exhibit is highly recommended. There is also a piece of rock on the wall with a spirit figure painted on it. I am not sure whether this had been removed from a gallery or painted by someone else but it is still a very effective piece of work.

There are quite a few other Kimberley pieces in the exhibit including those fabulous mangrove root canoes used by the Bardi and people at Kunmunya. There is also a wide variety of art and artefacts from the Kimberley as well.

Jack Vercoe

BOOK NOTE

Kimberley Cultural Trail. Broome Arts & Music Foundation, Inc., Broome, 2005. Soft cover, 97 pages, colour illustrations, maps. ISBN 0-646-45391-2. RRP \$14.95.

This book is a must not only for first-time visitors to the Kimberley but also for those who want to enhance their next visit. It showcases the region, with text compiled by Klari Kadar, numerous images assembled by Ruth Pearson, and information about language and music contributed by Bob Eagle. The images range from art and artists to buildings, people and scenery. There are also plenty of maps to show the location of the places mentioned in the book.

Kimberley Cultural Trail emphasizes indigenous culture and, for convenience, it divides the region into five geographical areas relevant to families of Aboriginal languages. That approach allows the book to present information about places, activities and people in a format that is both logical and practical.

In the first area, devoted to the Nyulnyulan languages, the cultural trail takes in Broome, Beagle Bay, Lombadina, Dampier Peninsula Tours, Jarlmadangah Burru Aboriginal Community, Myalls Bore, the Prison Boab Tree, Mowanjum, and Derby. The coverage of Dampier Land tours is excellent, with each descriptive passage accompanied by full contact details. If bushwalks and mud-crabbing don't appeal, the Outback Station Mail Run offered by Golden Eagle Airlines (Derby) might. Up to thirteen take-offs and landings in a single trip isn't my idea of fun but it certainly offers one way to see a lot of the Kimberley in a short time.

Area 2 (Bunuban family of languages) covers the country north and south of the Fitzroy River. The cultural trail takes in Windjana Gorge, Tunnel Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Darngku (Geikie Gorge), and Laarri Gallery. The gallery, situated in the Yiyili Community School, offers opportunities to meet artists and see them working.

Area 3 (Pama-Nyungan family of languages) extends across the southern Kimberley and along the Ord River into the Northern Territory. The cultural trail takes in Halls Creek, the China Wall, Old Halls Creek, Wolfe Creek Crater, Nyarna, Paruku Indigenous Protected Area, and Warlayirti Art Centre (Balgo). Visitors with the stamina to tackle the Tanami Road are welcome, on payment of a small fee, to camp at Nyarna (Lake Stretch), managed by the Mindibungu Aboriginal Community, or, further out, at Paruku (Lake Gregory), managed by the Walmajarri people.

Area 4 (Jarrakan family of languages) sweeps north-east to Cambridge Gulf with the cultural trail taking in Purnululu (Bungle Bungles), Warmun Art Centre, Doon Doon, Telegraph Hill, Wyndham, Zebra Rock Art Gallery, Kununurra, Mirima National Park, and Argyle Downs Homestead Museum. At Doon Doon, the Woolah Community's Tag-along Tours provide an opportunity for visitors who have 4WD vehicles to be taken to art sites, gorges, waterfalls, and fishing and swimming spots on the 400,000-hectare cattle station. Other tours operate out of Wyndham and Kununurra.

Area 5 (Worrorran family of languages) covers the central-north Kimberley where the cultural trail takes in rock art, the Gibb River Road, the Mitchell Plateau (Ngauwudu) and Kalumburu. Tours are available, and, for those who plan to stop off along the way, the Gibb River Road Express (a 4WD bus) sells a one-way ticket that allows unlimited stops over a three-month period.

Kimberley Cultural Trail can be purchased at the ABC shop in Broome, the Kimberley Bookshop in Broome, or direct from BAMF at bamf@westnet.com.au. Copies of the book will be available at the Kimberley Society meeting in February.

Cathie Clement

AIRNORTH KIMBERLEY MOON EXPERIENCE CONCERT

If last year's reports and awards are anything to go by, the Kimberley Moon Experience is beginning to rival the best of the concerts available in the south-west of Western Australia. The 2005 concert attracted a record crowd – more than 2300 people, including 750 visiting tourists – and it won the Significant Festivals and Events Award in the WA Tourism Awards.

This year's concert, scheduled for Saturday, 13 May, will coincide with a magical full moon and, for the fourth consecutive year, James Blundell will perform acoustic numbers that include his great track 'Kimberley Moon'. As the concert host, he will be introducing popular Australian singer/songwriter Kate Ceberano and her band as the main act. The support acts have yet to be announced.

DOCTORS CREEK TIDAL AREA

On 18 June 2005, Doctors Creek Tidal Area was nominated for inclusion in the National Heritage List and, as happens in such situations, the Australian Heritage Council assessed the place to determine whether it meets any of the National Heritage criteria. The Council's assessment went to Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, the Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, in November. He was also provided with written comments from the Office of Federal Affairs (Western Australia), Mr R B McKenzie of Derby, and the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley, which was invited to comment in accordance with subsection 324G(3A) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). On the basis of the information provided and other information previously published, the Minister decided, under section 324J of the EPBC Act, not to include Doctors Creek Tidal Area in the National Heritage List.

The Minister's reasons for his decision are spelt out in the 'Statement of Reasons' that was published as part of the nomination and assessment process. Those reasons, distilled to their essence, are that, whilst some parts of Doctors Creek Tidal Area clearly have heritage values at the State and local levels, neither the mangrove species richness of the tidal area nor its physical attributes are of greater interest than those of similar estuaries elsewhere in north-western Australia. The full statement, which was released on 20 December 2005, can be accessed at http://www.deh.gov.au/heritage/laws/publicdocuments/pubs/105841_01.doc.

CAN YOU HELP?

George Main, a curator at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra, is doing research on the significance of Derby town in the development of pastoralism in the Kimberley. The research is informing the development of the pastoralism section of the Creating a Country gallery, which will open in 2008. George would like to hear from people with knowledge about the history of Derby. He is also interested in identifying a broad range of historical objects in public and private collections which relate to Derby's involvement in the pastoral industry. Areas of particular interest include: the Derby jetty and associated structures, the Derby meatworks, the Boab Festival and the significance of the Boab tree to Derby residents, sea transport from Derby of livestock and wool, and trucking in the Kimberley. George may be contacted on 02 6208 5315, by email gmain@nma.gov.au, or by post at the National Museum of Australia, GPO Box 1901, Canberra ACT 2601.

ABORIGINAL ART FROM THE KIMBERLEY

Anyone interested in Aboriginal art can easily spend a day on the Internet visiting a range of excellent Web sites. The online material provided by Our Land Art Gallery in Kununurra <www.aboriginalartshop.com> is well worth a look. The site contains a superb gallery of work, divided into 'Ochre Artists' and 'Desert Artists', with biographical information for each of the featured artists. Of interest is that the site presents images of 'sold' works as well as new and recent works that are for sale. Some of the 'sold' works are marked as 'new' but none are dated. The artists' works in each gallery are presented alphabetically, ordered by the first name of each artist.

The site also contains an 'Aboriginal Art Information Centre', which has the following categories:

- 'Artefacts' (the boomerang, carved boab nuts, the didgeridoo, and crafts);
- 'Culture' (ceremonies, dancing, painters, and artists); and,
- 'History' (information and links for Aboriginal art, its traditions and origins, news & reviews, and, for rock art enthusiasts, material on Wandjina and Bradshaw art).

Other sites that feature information about Aboriginal art and artists from the Kimberley include the Savannah Way segment provided by the NRMA in New South Wales (http://www.mynrma.com.au/western_australia_kimberley_art.asp) and:

- Artplace, www.artplace.com.au/artistsrepresented.html
- Bradshaw Foundation, www.bradshawfoundation.com
- Holmes à Court Gallery, East Perth, www.holmesacourtgallery.com.au
- Jirrawun Aboriginal Art Corporation, Kununurra (see William Mora Galleries)
- Mangkaja Arts, Fitzroy Crossing, www.mangkaja.com
- Monsoon Gallery, Broome, www.monsoongallery.com.au
- Raft Artspace, Parap, NT, www.raftartspace.com.au
- Red Rock Art Gallery, Kununurra, www.redrockgallery.com
- Short St Gallery, Broome, www.shortstgallery.com
- Warlayirti Artists, Balgo, www.balgoart.org.au
- Waringarri Arts Centre, Kununurra, www.waringarriarts.com.au
- Warmun Art Centre, Turkey Creek, www.warmunart.com
- William Mora Galleries, Richmond, Vic, www.moragalleries.com.au
- Yarliyil Art Centre, Halls Creek, www.yarliyilarts.com

EXPLORATION LICENSES FOR DIAMONDS

The December 2005 report issued by United Kimberley Diamonds NL (UKD) mentions that the company has secured, through its wholly owned subsidiary Bauxite Australia Pty Ltd, twenty exploration license applications covering 3,801 km² in the North Kimberley Bauxite Province. That country extends in a south-west direction from the coast east of Cape Londonderry, taking in parts of the Drysdale and Carson Rivers, the Foster and Couchman Ranges, and other features. A copy of the report, with maps, can be seen at <http://www.ukd.com.au/documents/124.pdf>.

FUR, FEATHERS, AND FROGS

Anyone interested in the flora and fauna of the Kimberley will enjoy an article about the scaly-tailed possum on the Web site of The Marsupial Society of Australia (http://www.marsupialsociety.org/scaly_possum.html). Written by David Jackson, it provides information about the animal's behaviour and distribution, its Mitchell Plateau habitat, and its conservation.

For those interested in birds, the Web site of Birdwatching in Western Australia (<http://www.ausbird.com/wa.html>) has information about Kimberley birds, the Broome Bird Observatory, and tours that take people to Kimberley bird sites.

If frogs take your fancy, hop onto the Kimberley section of the Frogs Australia Web site (http://frogs.org.au/frogs/region_frogs.php?region_id=75). It advises that there are 39 frogs listed as occurring in the Kimberley or at the very edge of the region. The web site provides images and field guides, and the web manager is interested in hearing from anyone who finds an unlisted frog in the region.

Information about the Web sites mentioned above was provided by Chris Brenton.

Another Web site of interest is the new one created by the "Save The Gouldian Fund" at <http://www.savethegouldian.org>. The fund was formed at the AWC's Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary, in September 2005, to provide financial support for research into the decline of the wild population of the Gouldian finch. It is managed by the well-known aviculturist and long-time Gouldian lover Mike Fidler and his wife Elisabeth, together with Tasmanian aviculturist Marcus Pollard.

Less than 2500 Gouldian finches are believed to exist in the wild, and, according to the Web site, 'one of the most stunning, iconic finches that is known the world over is on the edge of the abyss in oblivion in the wild'. By comparison, in the 1850s, one observer wrote: 'The reeds about the spring were very dense & tall & were tenanted by thousands of finches of several species, which rose in a cloud at our approach, with a loud whirring sound'.

The aim of the "Save The Gouldian Fund" Web site is to outline the work of the fund and simultaneously encourage people to become sponsors and supporters of the research into the decline of the wild Gouldian finch, *Erythrura gouldiae*, across its range. If you can help with sponsorship or information about finches, please make contact. Marcus Pollard, who is currently doing some fund raising for the Fund, would love to hear from anyone who can point him towards a quote or quotes from people who saw the numbers of Gouldians that existed in Australia in the 1800s. He can be contacted at marcus_pollard@hotmail.com.

CAPTURING THE KIMBERLEY ON FILM

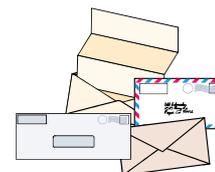
Northbridge (WA) photographer Robin Kornet has an exhibition titled *Old Dust* opening at the Perth Centre for Photography on 1 February. The Kimberley landscape dominates the exhibition, with the images having been captured during a three-week photographic camping trip that took Robin Kornet and his wife Kym through much of the region in June and July 2005. Excited by the contrasts and the brilliant colours of the landscape, he prepared for the exhibition by putting the prints in unique frames with sandy-textured paint. The prints will be on sale at the exhibition, which runs until 14 February, ranging from \$110 (unframed, in matt-board) to \$360 framed. The Perth Centre for Photography is on Brisbane Street near the corner of Beaufort Street, and this information about the exhibition comes from an article by Fiona Willan, published in the Perth *Voice* on 21 January.

CANE TOAD UPDATE

The northern Wet Season has the cane toads on the move, pushing the Kimberley Toadbusters to the limit. The Toadbusters have captured several thousand toads since early September, and recent reports tell of two people, guided by two others with torches, catching 320 toads at one site in one hour. *The West Australian* reported that many of those toads were mature males and likely to have been a colonising group that would have drawn females with their mating calls.

The Department of Agriculture's *Pestnote* No. 01/2005 advises that cane toads in Australia normally breed from June to January although some breeding does occur throughout the year. Females produce between 8000 and 35,000 eggs at one time, and they can at least breed twice a year. They are not overly fussy about the water they choose for laying their eggs, which are black and form long chains enclosed in a transparent, gelatinous cover. The tadpoles hatch in 48 to 72 hours, and, in optimum conditions, they can turn into toads in as little as 17 days. In less favourable conditions, the metamorphosis can take up to 180 days. The tadpoles are black—darker than native species tadpoles, which have a light or transparent abdomen. They also differ in behaviour as, being slower to develop lungs, they form large slow-moving shoals that do not rise to the surface for air.

On 15 January, the Stop the Cane Toad Foundation announced that it had appointed Graeme Sawyer of Frogwatch NT as the regional coordinator for the East Kimberley, with Derek Monks, a former CALM officer, as assistant coordinator.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reference to the article concerning “. . . recording and saving the built heritage of the Kimberley” which appeared in the October issue of the *Boab Bulletin*. I noticed that there was some reference to works on various old creek and river crossings. Members may be interested to know that, according to the late Victor Stacey, the Fox River crossing near Old Flora Valley Station was built in the depression years on dole money. Victor was a well known East Kimberley stockman, horse breaker and latterly contract yard builder etc. He was a bit of a character and used to get about in an old Ford truck, which he called the 'Blue Duck' and reckoned that he won it in a card game.

The cement crossing of the Black Elvire River near the Palm Gardens, on the old Flora/Halls Creek road is/was of considerable vintage, and at one stage it was the only sign of human intervention on that rough old track. The forty odd miles between town and Flora used to take anything between three to four hours to negotiate before the building of the beef roads. Also, along the old road down the Turner River, there is evidence of a fair bit of stonework revetting some of the creek crossings, obviously work carried out by experts.

One of the early alternate roads into Wyndham from the south was from Flora Valley down the Elvire to the Oaks River, up onto the Antrim Plateau along to the Turner River down to the Turner Homestead thence to Ord River Station then following the river around the White Mountain Range, past the Salt Pans, crossing the Negri River and past Spring Creek, Rosewood etc. We used to use the old road when going to the first Negri race meetings, it was a rough dusty day, but who cared then.

Cec Watts

RECOGNITION OF THE AIR BEEF ABBATOIR AT GLENROY

The Minister for Heritage, the Hon. Francis Logan, announced on 24 January that the ruin of the only Air Beef abattoir ever established in Western Australia has been listed in the State Register of Heritage Places. The Air Beef Abattoir, an innovative venture developed by the Blythe brothers and others in 1949, overcame the difficulties of marketing cattle from the remote inland stations of the central Kimberley. It did away with droving the cattle over punishing country to Wyndham, and it made a significant contribution to the quota of Australian meat exported to Britain. Cattle and pigs were slaughtered on site, and the chilled carcasses were then flown to Wyndham for freezing, packaging, and shipment.

In commenting on the heritage significance of the place, the Minister said, "The actual construction of the abattoir and aerodrome was also very innovative in such difficult climatic and logistical conditions, as most of the materials had to be transported to the site by air." Despite being built hurriedly and exhibiting shortcomings from the outset, it operated successfully from 1949 to 1965. From 1959, the carcasses were flown to Derby rather than Wyndham, and in the last two years of its operation, the construction of the road from Gibb River Station to Derby, made it possible for cattle to be trucked to that port.

Changes in the criteria under which meat could be processed for export to America heralded the end of the Glenroy facility because, with the infrastructure aging and inadequate, it was not feasible to rebuild the abattoir. Instead, the Blythe brothers and others put their money into the establishment and operation of the Derby Meat Processing Company (DEMCO).

The heritage listing of the Air Beef Abattoir and Aerodrome and Glenroy Homestead Group is currently at the interim stage and is open for comment until 3 March 2006.

THE DOG ATE MY HOMEWORK

If you are wondering what happened to the summaries of the monthly talks that usually appear in the *Boab Bulletin*, our scribes do have explanations. Christmas, travel, health issues, and gremlins all got in the way of the summaries being prepared in time to go into this issue. Every effort will be made to have the summaries available for the April issue.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Tossie Baadjo, an Aboriginal health worker from Balgo, is one of the inaugural winners of Western Australia's Aboriginal Health Awards. The 47-year-old desert woman works alongside nurses at the Balgo health clinic where local residents take her bush medicines in conjunction with more conventional drugs. She received her Commitment to Aboriginal Health award at a health promotion conference held in Perth in November 2005.

In reporting on the awards in *The West Australian* on 21 December, Marnie McKimmie also noted that Goolari Media Enterprises in Broome won the health promotion award for a 'traditional Aboriginal-flavoured version of the travelling cooking television show Surfing the Menu'. The show consists of six ten-minute episodes in which cooks visit Kimberley places, hunt for tucker that includes stingray, and then prepare and cook the meal in the bush. It sounds like the sort of show that, as well as encouraging Aboriginal people to retain traditional skill in their contemporary lifestyle, would go down well with some of the Kimberley Society's

more intrepid bushwalkers. A third award that went to the Kimberley was the one for Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. It was won by the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service's Council for the child sexual assault and abuse support program provided by its regional centre. That program has now been running for four years.

A Positive Image Award for 2005/2006 went to Kimberley student Felicity Matthews of the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education. These awards recognise, as District Ambassadors, secondary school students who promote a positive image of young people within their school or community.

The 130 finalists in the Premier's Teacher of the Year Awards for 2005 included Anne Harris-Walker from Cable Beach Primary School and Kim Courtenay from the Broome Campus of Kimberley TAFE. The awards recognise the outstanding skills and excellence of teachers and lecturers in public schools and TAFEWA colleges throughout Western Australia, and, in the rounds that select the finalists, each round winner receives an award for excellence of \$1000. The Premier's Teacher of the Year, Wayne Baddock of Busselton Senior High School, received a prize of \$25,000 and three other teachers received Highly Commended awards of \$5000 each.

Broome Senior High School Students did particularly well in their examinations in 2005, and the top public high school students throughout the state received awards of \$1000 each. The Broome awards went to Bonnie Derne (TEE) and Tiffany Cosiales (WSA) while those at Kununurra went to Amy Hinde (TEE) and Wade Watts (WSA). The publicity surrounding this award program caused some contention because the awards do not recognise the achievement of private school students.



Don't forget, this is your newsletter.

News or coverage of Kimberley events and other items of interest are most welcome.

Items can be sent to clement@q-net.net.au or to the post box.

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